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What Makes You Mad?

When did you last feel angry? What was it like? Did you get red in the face? Did you feel shaky, sweaty, or dizzy? Were you irritated, sad, or anxious? Did you rub your head, pace around, or raise your voice? Scientists say anger is natural and part of being human – as long as it doesn't get the better of us! If it does, it can be very harmful – it can ruin our relationships, cause violence, and even start wars. If you think *you* get angry, though, just wait until you see the worst temper tantrums in the animal world! Read on and watch the fur fly, when hissy fits are taken to the extreme.

Seeing Red

Hissy fits come in all shapes and sizes. Mostly they're just for show, but it pays to get out of the way when some creatures flip their lids! Meet the chameleon. Just like some of us, it changes color when it gets angry. By expanding and **contracting** layers of **pigment** cells inside its skin, it can instantly show how it's feeling. So when a male moves into another male's **territory**, for instance, it only takes 20 seconds for a chameleon to turn red. The bright colors combined with fierce acting are the chameleon's way of winning fights without having to resort to extreme violence that can result in injury or worse.

A chameleon will change color to show how it's feeling. ▼



▲ Your adrenal glands (shown in green) help prepare you to fight or run.

For chameleons and humans, simply *looking* angry and red can help to avoid dangerous encounters. This is just one of the signs showing that your nervous system has to get your body ready for action. That's because a hissy fit triggers your body's **fight or flight** reaction. Thanks to your adrenal glands, your heart starts racing and you breathe faster. Sitting on top of your kidneys, these glands produce stress hormones that stimulate many parts of the body, like the tiny blood vessels of your face and neck. When you get angry, these **capillaries** expand and cause your face to redden.

Fast Fact

Some people use stress balls to relieve tension. In the past, though, stressed people found different ways to relax.

Napoleon Bonaparte played with a yo-yo, and **Winston Churchill** laid bricks!



▲ Napoleon Bonaparte



▲ Winston Churchill